

**STATEMENT OF SUE MASICA, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 3434 TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ACQUIRE THE MCLOUGHLIN HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN OREGON CITY, OREGON, AND TO ADMINISTER THE SITE AS A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**July 16, 2002**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on this bill to acquire the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, Oregon, and to administer the site as a unit of the National Park System.

We do not support this legislation unless the bill is amended to authorize that the McLoughlin House National Historic Site to be added to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in Vancouver, Washington, instead of authorizing it as a separate unit of the National Park System. We have studied the McLoughlin House and found that it meets the suitability and feasibility criteria for addition to the National Park System. We feel it could be managed more efficiently as part of an existing park unit. Since 1948 the McLoughlin House Memorial Association has had an agreement with the National Park Service so that the both the McLoughlin House National Historic Site and Fort Vancouver National Historic Site would work cooperatively together. We believe that the most effective management of the McLoughlin House would result by the National Park Service continuing this cooperative working relationship at both sites. The one-time acquisition cost of the McLoughlin House is approximately \$445,000. The cost of maintaining and operating the McLoughlin House as a unit of the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is approximately \$285,000 per year. The Department feels that the addition of the McLoughlin House to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site would result in greater cost-efficiencies than its designation as a separate unit.

In the General Management Plan revision for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, the National Park

Service studied potential boundary adjustment alternatives, including one that adds the McLoughlin House. This alternative meets the National Park Service's criteria for suitability and feasibility as a unit of the National Park System. The plan revision goes on to say that adding the McLoughlin House National Historic Site to Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is

“a value to the American people and provides for NPS operations and interpretation.”

The McLoughlin House is located in Oregon City, Oregon along the dramatic Willamette River Falls and southeast of downtown Portland. It is a short drive from Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, north of Portland, in the state of Washington and along the Columbia River.

Recognized for its national significance, the McLoughlin House National Historic Site, designated in 1941, was the first national historic site designated in the western United States. The site has been operated as an affiliated area of the National Park System by the McLoughlin Memorial Association, which has owned and operated the site since 1909. The site received assistance from the National Park Service when Fort Vancouver National Historic Site was established in 1948. In the last few years, the National Park Service has provided staff and funds for critical needs of the house, the collection, and the grounds.

John McLoughlin is recognized as the “Father of Oregon.” He came west and established the Hudson's Bay Company's regional headquarters and depot of Fort Vancouver on the north side of the Columbia River in what is now the State of Washington. Through his leadership, he maintained peace between Great Britain, which claimed the territory, settlers from the United States who were part of the country's westward expansion, and the native tribes in the region. Despite the policies of the Hudson's Bay Company, John McLoughlin foresaw the area's future, and offered aid and supplies to the American settlers many of who were sick, starving, and ill equipped to begin a new life.

McLoughlin built his home across the Columbia River, in Oregon City, where he continued to assist those in need. This house, because of McLoughlin's tremendous generosity, became known as the “House of

Many Beds.” After becoming an American citizen, John McLoughlin became Mayor of Oregon City and increased his selfless acts of philanthropy throughout the region. His is the history of the west, as Jamestown is the history of the east.

The McLoughlin House has retained its historic integrity as one of the earliest examples of its architectural style in the Pacific Northwest, and serves as a focal point for education and tourism. The site provides a location where school children to learn first-hand about the early history of the area. The McLoughlin House provides a bookend to the story of the settling of the west that is told at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

As a unit of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, we envision sustaining the strong relationship with the McLoughlin Memorial Association as well as enhancing the interpretive, educational, and maintenance responsibilities that visitors demand and a century and a half old house needs. It is a testament to the association and the citizens of Oregon City that the house retains its integrity and special association with the former Oregon Territory. During a local election held in 2001, a ballot measure asked voters to allow Oregon City to grant a property interest to the National Park Service. This measure was approved by over 80% of the voters.

The Department remains committed to the President’s Initiative to reduce the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service. While the Department recognizes that this legislation may divert funds from this effort, the acquisition of the McLoughlin House and its administration as a part of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is important to the viability of this nationally significant resource.

We would be pleased to work with the committee on revising the bill’s language to make it consistent with this testimony. This concludes my testimony. I am glad to answer any questions that you or members of the Committee may have.